

Simon Peter
Mark 3:16
December 9, 2012

Introduction

Our Lord Jesus Christ has chosen twelve men as apostles, teaching and training them, so they will be ready for the ministry after His resurrection. These men are the only options that He creates for Himself—there are no alternative plans in case they have failed. These are the men that Jesus chooses to lead His church.

***Ephesians 2:19-22** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.*

2,000 years after the apostles have died, the church is still building, and it will continue to build until that final number that the Lord has appointed to eternal life has believed. After His resurrection, He charges the Eleven to go out into the world and make disciples of all nations, and they obey His word. We are the fruit of the Great Commission.

Who are the Twelve? The Synoptic Gospels and Acts have such listings of the Twelve, and the listings are remarkably similar.

Matthew 10:1-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:13
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew	James, son of Zebedee	Andrew	James, son of Zebedee
James, son of Zebedee	John	James, son of Zebedee	John
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus
Lebbaeus, Thaddeus	Thaddeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Simon the Canaanite	Simon the Canaanite	Judas, son of James	Judas, son of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

Some observations:

- All the listings have Simon Peter first. He is the leader of the group. In fact, Peter is mentioned more times in the Gospels than any other name except Jesus.
- All the listings are in groups of four with the first name as leader of that smaller group. Philip always heads the list of the second four, and James, son of Alphaeus always heads the third group of four.
- Judas Iscariot is always listed last.
- The listings also show the closeness of the disciples to Jesus. The closest to Jesus are Peter, James, and John. Each disciple after that has a more distant relationship with Jesus. This does not mean that the last four disciples do not know Jesus (because the Twelve are all very close to Jesus---much closer than any people during that time).

All the listings agree that Peter is the leader of the Apostles. No other name is mentioned more than Peter (other than Jesus) in the Gospels. No Apostles have been rebuked by Jesus other than Peter. No other Apostles have rebuked Jesus in the Gospels except for Peter. Peter is often brash, impetuous, and has a foot-shaped mouth; however, our Lord singles out Peter for ministry, and Peter has the makings of being a good leader. Our Lord molds him, teaches him and refines him for His work in the future...and what a man Peter

becomes. There are several incidents in Peter's life that I want to point out how our Lord has changed him to become the man that our Lord calls the Rock.

I. Genuine Man

- His name
 - Simon bar Jonah
 - Simon son of Jonah

Matthew 16:17 *Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by My Father in heaven."*

- Simon is a very common name in Israel
- The Gospels record 7 different Simons
- Jesus gives Simon a different name: Peter
 - Means rock (from Greek, *petros*)
 - Cephas in Aramaic

John 1:42 *And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).*

- Nickname—this is what Jesus wants Simon to be—a rock, a leader
- Do we know anything else of Peter?
 - Fisherman
 - Has a wife

Mark 1:30 *But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once.*

1 Corinthians 9:5 *Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas?*

- Jesus using Simon's name
 - Showing Simon's fleshly nature
 - Rebuke or correction

Luke 22:31 *Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat.*

- Character of Simon Peter
 - Headstrong
 - Impulsive—speak or act without thinking
 - Intensely loyal to Jesus

Transition: Simon Peter is a man just like us. He has a fallen nature the same as us, and like us, our Lord has to train him to be the man He wants him to be. We often find faults in Peter and criticize him. Let us look at Peter and see what our Lord does in Peter's life to forge such a strong man after His resurrection.

II. Genuine Faith

Matthew 14:22-32 *Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowd. ²³After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone, ²⁴but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. ²⁵During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ²⁸"Lord, if it's You," Peter replied, "tell me to come to You on the water." ²⁹"Come," He said. Then*

Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. "You of little faith," He said, "why did you doubt?" ³²And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.

- Observations
 - Peter was the only one that got out of the boat unto the water
 - He asks Jesus to command him to get out of the boat
 - Why? (Remember Peter is a fisherman and he knows the danger of being on a boat in the middle of a windy sea)
 - He wants to be with Jesus—safety in the Lord
 - He does the same thing when Jesus was arrested....following Him at a distance.
- What did Peter learn from this?

1 Peter 1:3-7 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, **you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

- His faith never wavered
- Trials of life are temporary
- Testing strengthens faith

III. Genuine Submission

Matthew 17:24-27 When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?" ²⁵He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" ²⁶Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. ²⁷Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."

- Observations
 - Temple tax—for upkeep of temple
 - Required for all men over 20

Exodus 30:14-16 All who cross over, those twenty years old or more, are to give an offering to the LORD. ¹⁵The rich are not to give more than a half shekel and the poor are not to give less when you make the offering to the LORD to atone for your lives. ¹⁶Receive the atonement money from the Israelites and use it for the service of the Tent of Meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD, making atonement for your lives.

- Peter wonders if Jesus is supposed to pay taxes (he knows that king's sons do not pay taxes)

Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

- Jesus' point—sons are free; He has absolute heavenly authority not to pay taxes
- But for earthly authorities—this is the wrong message. They will not understand this and this can create problems
- What did Peter learn from this?

1 Peter 2:13-18 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by Him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. ¹⁶**Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.** ¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. ¹⁸Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

- Peter learns submission to earthly authorities
- Don't abuse your freedom

IV. Genuine Leader

Luke 22:31-32 Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. ³³But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." ³⁴Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know Me."

- Observation
 - Peter was bold in his statement
 - He was relying on his own strength
 - He tried to correct Jesus
- What did Peter learn from this?

1 Peter 5:8-10 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, **standing firm in the faith,** because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. ¹⁰And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, **will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.**

- Learn from your failures and show compassion
- Your brothers will fail as you have failed give them strength
- Peter learns to rely on the Lord's strength

Conclusion

Peter becomes the rock for the Lord. In Acts, we see him preaching on the day of Pentecost and 3,000 people are saved that day. We see him raising a girl from the dead (Dorcas) and we see him healing people. He is the first one to reach out to the Gentiles.

Peter died a martyr's death. He was crucified upside down. He did not feel worthy to be crucified in the same manner as the Lord Jesus was crucified. What faith! What love! What a man that Jesus calls to be the leader of the Twelve.

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen.